Excise Department.

Coming to the Excise Department, my suggestions are two-fold. The first relates to the purchase of salt. Till about the year 1865, we were manufacturing our own salt in Cochin. Eevn now in Travancore, they are making nearly fifty per cent of their salt. I should think that we could also with advantage follow the same course. Besides the possible gain to be derived thereby, we can hope that it would give work to a number of young men, and we can further have the satisfaction of circulating the money spent on salt in our State.

My second proposal on this head is in connection with the distillery for the manufacture of alcohol. I understand that the distillery is at present being managed by a contractor, who is a foreign subject. The plant and machinery belong to the Government, and the contractor exists only to reap the middleman's profit. I should think that the Government has to take immediate steps to bring the concern to its direct control, so that we may not lose the profits derived from it.

Forest and the Tramway.

Now, Sir, with respect to the Forest and Tramway, much has been said both in this House and in the report of the Special Finance Committee. In their report, they come to the unanimous conclusion to do away with the Tramway. But to my mind, the Government has to think twice, before it makes any final decision on the matter. To pull down the Tramway would itself require a good amount of expenditure. What I would suggest is that, if all the tracts covered by the Tramway have been completely denuded of timber, it would be advantageous to have the plots adjacent to the Tramway line registered to private individuals for the purpose of agricultural operations. The Tramway could be converted into a pukka Railway line with arrangements to carry passengers also. This would open out a wide tract of land for industrial and agricultural operations. Anyhow, I request the Head of the Department concerned, with his ripe and long experience, to probe into the details and advise the Government on the matter.

Law and Justice.

I shall next deal with the Department of Law and Justice. The budget, on the face of it, shows an income of Rs. 11,300 and an expenditure of Rs. 2,51,500. But to arrive at the actual profit and loss account you ought to credit the income derived by the sale of court-fee stamps and labels to this Department, which comes to Rs. 4,05,000. You should also exclude from the expenditure item an amount of Rs. 4,884

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for factories and boilers, which could not legitimately be clubbed together with this Department. By doing so, you get a clear profit of Rs. 1,69,984 from this Department. I worked out the above figure to show that it is possible to improve the status of officers in this Department. The necessity of keeping up the status of the judiciary, so as to enable them to discharge their duties without fear or favour, is apparent. A glance at the scale of pay allowed to the judiciary in Travancore and British India would show us that the present condition of the judiciary within the State is anything but satisfactory. In this connection, it may not be out of place to observe that, whereas we assess court-fee at 6¼ per cent of the suit valuation, in Travancore it is only 5 per cent. No enlightened Government should insist on making a profit by the administration of justice, for it cannot on any account be considered to be a commercial concern.

Agriculture and Panchayats.

Next, Sir, I shall deal with the Department of Agriculture and Panchayats. This is an infant Department of the State. But it appears that it has been born an orphan. It has been bemoaning the loss of its parents; but there is no one to give heed to it. I mean the Department is not deriving as much support and encouragement as it deserves. Time was when our grandfathers in the country parts used to say that Government exists only for collecting tax. But, thanks to the enlightened policy of the Darbar, we have been endowed with an institution for the reorganisation and reconstruction of our villages, an institution which has no parallel in the adjoining States. But, as I said before, its growth has become stunted. The Special Finance Committee has been too parsimonious in its allotment for this Department. It has arrived at its figures, as usual, on the basis of the average for the preceding years. It is just like providing future rations for a boy on the basis of the average food he has taken, while he was a child. I would give you a few instances to show that the allotment to the Panchayats is very poor indeed. The Panjal Panchayat has sent in a budget estimate for Rs. 9,926 for 1104. But we find that only Rs. 1,657 has been allotted for it. Again the Kariyannoor Panchayat has sent in a budget estimate for Rs. 6,660 in 1104. But only Rs. 1,356 has been allotted for it, in the present preliminary budget. You will further find from the budget estimates of the Panchayats that several original works have been recurring items in the Panchayat budgets for a number of years. It is also to be noted that, whereas the Public Works Department spends about Rs. 500 and Rs. 600 for annual maintenance of roads, per mile, we find

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